

## Library & Information Science Student's perception on Digital Library

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### ABSTRACT

Rapid advances in information technologies have revolutionized the role of libraries. As a result, libraries face new challenges, competitors, demands and expectations. Libraries are redesigning services and information products to add value to their services and to satisfy the changing information needs of the user community. Traditional libraries are still handling largely printed materials that are expensive and bulky. Information seekers are no longer satisfied with only printed materials. They want to supplement the printed information with more dynamic electronic resources. Demands for digital information are increasing. The present study aims to find out the perception of library & information science students of Mizoram University on digital library. Findings show a positive perception by majority of the students.

**Keywords:** Digital library, library and information science students, perception, Mizoram University

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Digital, Born Digital and Digitization are the buzz words the present Library and Information Service (LIS) professionals are familiar with. Rapid developments in computers, Information and Communications Technologies have thrust upon the LIS professionals new and added responsibilities. Their role has undergone a metamorphosis from the traditional 'book-keeper' to 'bit-keeper' or 'bit-manager'. This is more so because of the ever growing size of the Internet and the volume (bits) of information and of course the structure of the internet which is mostly unorganised. Online information doubles every six months and the total digital information that is available on the Internet has gone up. Researchers, student and faculty

members prefer to search for information online due to the obvious reasons of speed, accuracy and accessibility from anywhere in the world.

Sifting the bits of information from the cyberspace is a challenge to the professional librarian. In order to satisfy the Five Laws of Library Science he has to look beyond his own library resources. He needs to cross over boundaries of his library. He needs to throw open his resources and be able to access the resources of other libraries. He needs to share the resources. This is possible only when his resources are made available online. That is where digital libraries play an important role. Digital Libraries are "libraries without walls" where one can access information 24 × 7 days and from anywhere in the

world. Digital Libraries breaks barriers of time, space and language and culture and facilitates resource sharing on the internet and thereby better usage of information.

An informal definition of a digital library is a managed collection of information, with associated services, where the information is stored in digital formats and accessible over a network. A crucial part of this definition is that the information is managed. A stream of data sent to earth from a satellite is not a library. The same data, when organized systematically, becomes a digital library collection. Most people would not consider a database containing financial record of one company to be a digital library, but would accept a collection of such information from many companies as part of a library. Digital libraries contain diverse information for use by many different users. Digital libraries range in size from tiny to huge. They can use any type of computing equipment and any suitable software. The unifying theme is that information is organized on computers and available over a network, with procedures to select the material in the collections, to organize it, to make it available to users, and to achieve it.

### **Rationale of the study**

Information and Communication Technology has revolutionized the concept of libraries. A 'digital library' comprises digital collections, services and infrastructure to support lifelong learning, research, scholarly communication as well as preservation and conservation of our recorded knowledge.

This is the era for visual learning. People are changing the way they read because of the developments in digital technologies. Digital Libraries are very much essential for higher education to understand the concepts with the help of Visualizations.

Quality in education is the major concern in all institutions of learning. Availability of Text Books, Tutorials, videos, Audio Lessons in Digital Formats can reform the entire education in India.

Advances in digital technologies allows educators and teachers to redefine visual learning. By combining image technologies and teaching,

institutions can gradually integrate visual teaching with digital learning. Teachers & Students can utilize digital images and charts to aide learners and staff by establishing a knowledge base

Students can now access the E library using Tablets or Computers and can gain much quality of Education then before using Visual thinking

Visual thinking is a learning style where the learner better understands and retains information when ideas, words and concepts are associated with images. Research tells us that the majority of students in a regular classroom need to see information in order to learn it. Some common visual learning strategies include creating graphic organizers, diagramming, mind mapping, outlining etc.

The importance of digital library for teachers and students cannot be overlooked. Therefore it is felt that perception of students in the use of digital library be investigated. It is believed that through this study, one will be able to find out the extend of student's use of digital library for their learning in this north Eastern part of the country. Hence this study is taken up.

**Objective:** To find out the perception of Students of Library and Information Science, MZU on the use of digital library

**Methodology:** The present study belongs to the category of 'Descriptive Research Survey'

**Sample:** For the present study, the sample consisted of 34 Students from the Department of Library and Information Science , Mizoram University.

**Collection of data:** Data was collected by giving the questionnaire to all the students of Library and Information Science. All those who are present on the day of data collection were given the questionnaire.

**Tools used:** For the purpose of collecting data "Questionnaire on the use of Digital Library" constructed by the investigators was used. The questionnaire has 17 items where the respondents has to underline their response out of the three options provided in each item. Sample of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix - 1

**Analysis and interpretation:** Data was analyzed by finding out the percentage of the responses of the students for each item and are presented in the following tables:

- 1. Frequency in Using the Web:** With respect to the question on how often the respondents use the web, the following table 1 shows the result of the respondents reaction.

**Table 1:** Frequency in Using the Web (N=34)

| Item                             | Never    | Sometimes  | Often      |
|----------------------------------|----------|------------|------------|
| 1. How often do you use the web? | 1(2.94%) | 14(41.18%) | 19(55.88%) |

The above table shows that 55.88% of Library and Information Science students often used the web, 41.18% sometimes used the web, while 2.94% (i.e. only one student) never used the web. This shows that majority of the students are quite familiar with the web.

- 2. Satisfaction of digital library site:** With respect to the question on how satisfying is the use of the digital library , the following table 2 shows the result of the respondents perception.

**Table 2:** Satisfaction of digital library site (N=34)

| Item  | Frustrating | No particular opinion | Satisfying |
|---|-------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 2. How satisfying is the digital library site to use? | 5(14.71%)   | 12(35.29%)            | 17(50%)    |

The above table shows that 50% of the students are satisfied when they use the digital library site, while 14.71% found it frustrating. There are 35.29% who do not have any particular opinion on it. This indicates that majority of the students are satisfied when they use the digital library.

- 3. Appealing look and feel of the site:** With respect to the question on how appealing the look and feel of the site is, in making the respondent want to use it, the following table 3 shows the result of the respondents perception.

**Table 3:** Appealing look and feel of the site (N=34)

| Item   | Dull   | No particular opinion | Appealing  |
|--|--------|-----------------------|------------|
| 3. How appealing is the look and feel of the site in terms of making you want to use it? | 0 (0%) | 18(52.94%)            | 16(47.06%) |

The above table shows that while 52.94% of the students have no particular opinion on the look and feel of the site, 47.06% of students feel that the site is rather appealing in terms of its look and that this makes them want to use it. No one perceives the site to be boring. Majority of students have no particular opinion with respect to the look of the site

- 4. Flexibility of the digital library site:** With respect to the question on how flexible the digital library is, in helping the respondents to complete their task, the following table 4 shows the result of the respondent's perception.

**Table 4:** Flexibility of digital library site (N=34)

| Item  | Rigid    | No particular opinion | Flexible   |
|---|----------|-----------------------|------------|
| 4. How flexible is the digital library site in helping you to complete your task? | 2(5.88%) | 7(20.59%)             | 25(73.53%) |

The above table shows that 73.53% of the students found the digital library site was flexible, 5.88% of students found that it was rigid, while 20.59% of the students were found to have no opinion at all. This shows that majority of the students found the digital library site flexible enough to help them complete their task.

- 5. Effectiveness of digital library site:** With respect to the question on the effectiveness of the digital library site in helping them complete their task, the following table 5 shows the result of the respondent's perception.

**Table 5:** Effectiveness of digital library site (N=34)

| Item   | Not effective | No particular opinion | Effective  |
|--|---------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 5. How effective is the digital library site in helping you complete the task? | 3(8.82%)      | 4(11.77%)             | 27(79.41%) |

The above table shows that 79.41% of the students found the digital library was effective, while only 8.82% of the students found it was not effective. 11.77% of students have no opinion. This shows that majority of the students found that the digital library site was effective enough in helping them complete their task.

#### 6. Difficulty of text on the digital library pages:

With respect to the question on how difficult the text in the digital library pages was to read, the following table 6 shows the result of the respondent's perception.

**Table 6:** Difficulty of text on the digital library pages (N=34)

| Item   | Difficult | No particular opinion | Easy       |
|--|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| 6. How difficult is the text on the digital library pages to read? | 6(17.65%) | 9(26.47%)             | 19(55.88%) |

The above table shows that 55.88% of the students found the text on the digital library pages easy, 17.65% of students found that it was difficult, while 26.47% of the students were found to have no particular opinion. This shows that majority of the students found the text on the digital library pages easy to read and help them complete their task.

**7. Helpfulness of pictures and graphics:** With respect to the question on how helpful the pictures and graphics are, the following table 7 shows the result of the respondent's perception

**Table 7:** Helpfulness of pictures and graphics (N=34)

| Item  | Unhelpful | No particular opinion | Helpful    |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| 7. How helpful are the pictures and graphics? | 3(8.82%)  | 3(8.82%)              | 28(82.36%) |

As depicted in table 7, 82.36% of the students found the pictures and graphics of the site helpful, only 8.82% of students found that it unhelpful, while 8.82% of the students were found to have no opinion at all. This shows that majority of the students found the pictures and graphics helpful.

#### 8. Organization of information on the pages:

With respect to the question on how well the information on the pages were organized, the following table 8 shows the result of the respondent's perception.

**Table 8:** Organization of information on the pages (N=34)

| Item   | Confusing  | No particular opinion | Clear       |
|--|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 8. How well is the information on the pages organized? | 9 (26.47%) | 12 (35.29%)           | 13 (38.24%) |

The above table shows that 38.24% of the students found the organization of information on the pages was clear, 26.47% of students found that it was confusing, while 35.29% of the students were found to have no opinion at all. This shows that a large number of the students found the information on the pages were well organized.

#### 9. Use of terminology, language and format:

With respect to the question on how easy the terminology, language and format were to understand, the following table 9 shows the result of the respondent's perception.

**Table 9:** Use of terminology, language and format (N=34)

| Item  | Difficult | No particular opinion | Easy    |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|---------|
| 9. How easy is the terminology, language and format used to understand? | 5(14.71%) | 12(35.29%)            | 17(50%) |

As shown in the above table, 50% of the students found it easy to understand the terminology, language and format used, 35.29% of the respondents were found to have no opinion, while 14.71% of the

respondents found it difficult to understand the terminology, language and format used. This shows that majority of the students found the terminology, language and format used easy to understand.

**10. Fast response of digital library site:** With respect to the question on whether the digital library site responds fast enough, the following table 10 shows the result of the respondent's perception.

**Table 10:** Fast response of digital library site (N=34)

| Item  | Slow        | No particular opinion | Fast        |
|---|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 10. Do you find that digital library site responds fast enough? | 11 (32.35%) | 12 (35.30%)           | 11 (32.35%) |

As depicted in the above table, 35.30% of the students were found to have no particular opinion, 32.35% reported that the digital library site responds fast enough and at the same time, another 32.35% also reported that the response of the site was slow.

**11. Ease of correcting mistakes when using digital library site:** With respect to the question on how easy it is to correct mistakes when using the digital library sites, the following table no 11 shows the result of the respondent's perception.

**Table 11:** Ease of correcting mistakes when using digital library site (N=34)

| Item   | Difficult  | No particular opinion | Easy        |
|--|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 11. How easy is it for you to correct your mistakes when using the digital library site? | 5 (14.71%) | 11 (32.35%)           | 18 (52.94%) |

The above table shows that 52.94% of the students found it easy to correct mistakes when using the digital library site, 5.14% of students found that it was difficult, while 32.35% of the students were found to have no opinion. This shows that majority of the students found it easy to correct mistakes when using the digital library.

**12. Clarity of links to external web sites from the digital library site :** With respect to the question on how easy are the links to external websites are from the digital library sites displayed and highlighted, the following table 12 shows the result of the respondent's perception.

**Table 12:** Clarity of links to external web sites from the digital library site (N=34)

| Item   | Clear       | No particular opinion | Unclear   |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 12. How clearly are the links to external web sites from the digital library site displayed and highlighted? | 21 (61.77%) | 12 (35.29%)           | 1 (2.94%) |

The above table shows that 61.77% of the students found the links to external websites from the digital library site was clearly displayed and highlighted, 35.29% of the students were found to have no opinion, only 2.94% of the students found the links to external websites from the digital library site unclear. This shows that majority of the students felt that the links to external websites from the digital library site were clearly displayed and highlighted.

**13. Difficulty in identifying where one is in the digital library site:** With respect to the question on how difficult it is to identify where one is in the digital library site, the following table 13 shows the result of the respondent's perception.

**Table 13:** Difficulty in identifying where one is in the digital library site (N=34)

| Item   | Difficult | No particular opinion | Easy        |
|--|-----------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 13. How difficult is it to identify where you are in the digital library site? | 3 (8.82%) | 13 (38.24%)           | 18 (52.94%) |

The above table shows that 52.94% of the students found it easy to identify where one is in the digital library site, 8.82% of students found that it was difficult, while 38.24% of the students were found

to have no opinion. This shows that majority of the students found it was easy to identify where one is in the digital library site.

**14. Difficulty of finding a particular topic:** With respect to the question on how difficult it is to find a particular topic thought to exist, the following table no 14 shows the result of the respondent's perception

**Table 14:** Difficulty of finding a particular topic (N=34)

| Item   | Difficult | No particular opinion | Easy       |
|--|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| 14. How difficult is it to find a particular topic thought to exist? | 6(17.65%) | 15(44.11%)            | 13(38.24%) |

The above table shows that 38.24% of the students found it easy to find a particular topic, 17.65% of students said that it was difficult to find a particular topic, while 44.11% of the students were found to have no particular opinion.

**15. Difficulty in returning to a topic left previously:** With respect to the question on how difficult it is to return to a topic left previously, the following table 15 shows the result of the respondent's perception

**Table 15:** Difficulty in returning to a topic left previously (N=34)

| Item  | Difficult | No particular opinion | Easy       |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| 15. Is it difficult to return to a topic left previously? | 6(17.65%) | 8(23.53%)             | 20(58.82%) |

The above table shows that 58.82% of the students found it easy to return to a topic left previously, 17.65% of students found that it was difficult, while 23.53% of the students have no opinion at all. This shows that majority of the students found it easy to return to a topic left previously.

**16. Difficulty in using the search facilities:** With respect to the question on how difficult it is to

use the search facilities, the following table 16 shows the result of the respondent's perception

**Table 16:** Difficulty in using the search facilities (N=34)

| Item  | Difficult | No particular opinion | Easy       |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| 16. How difficult it is to use the search facilities? | 2(5.88%)  | 6(17.65%)             | 26(76.47%) |

The above table shows that 76.47% of the students found the search facilities in the digital library site was easy to use, 5.88% of students found it was difficult, while 17.65% of the students were found to have no opinion at all. This shows that majority of the students found the search facilities of the digital library site easy to use.

**17. Difficulty of retrieving material:** With respect to the question on how difficult it is to retrieve or download material once they are found, the following table 17 shows the result of the respondent's perception

**Table 17:** Difficulty of retrieving material (N=34)

| Item  | Difficult | No particular opinion | Easy       |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| 17. How difficult it is to retrieve/download material once you have found them? | 8(23.53%) | 8(23.53%)             | 18(52.94%) |

The above table shows that 52.94% of the students discovered it was easy to retrieve the material already found, 23.53% of students felt that it was difficult, while 23.53% of the students were found to have no opinion at all. This shows that majority of the students felt it was easy to retrieve/download material once they have found them.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study indicate that majority of the students are familiar with the digital library and are satisfied when using the digital library. They feel that it is flexible and effective

enough to help them complete their task. Majority of them perceive the text on the digital library pages easy to read, and the pictures and graphics are also very helpful. Most of the students perceive that the terminology, language and format used in the digital library are easy to understand and that it is easy to correct mistakes when they use the digital library. The links to external web sites from the digital library site which are displayed and highlighted are perceived to be clear and it was easy to identify where one is in the digital library site, it was also easy to return to a topic left previously. Majority of students also found that it was easy to use the search facilities and download the material once they have found them. These findings shows that even in these remote part of India, students have stated using the digital library and are finding it effective, easy and clear enough in helping them complete their task.

Central Library of Mizoram University has gone through a sea-change in the last two decades with a number of developments. Although, it was started two decades back, the number of books in its collection has grown up to more than 1 lakh. Besides this, it also has a rich collection of thesis, M.Phil dissertations, and various bound versions of journals. It also subscribes to vast numbers of journals, periodicals, and dailies. Recently, it has launched a mass digitization process to save its

publications and documents and got those digitized. Students have started using this digital library and found that it has helped them in their studies

## CONCLUSION

Over the centuries, libraries have been the keepers and distributors of books, journals, maps and other materials that are used by students in the learning process. They have also been the legal deposit of part of the products of scholarly publications – theses & dissertations, articles, technical reports, etc. In general, students have been patrons of the libraries of their institutions. In order to make more contents available and thus benefit students and faculty, pools of institutions have engaged in commuting items and/or their copies. There is no reason for digital libraries not to have the same functions of traditional libraries, except that they can add functions and value due to their digital and networked nature.

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